

separation – looking after yourself

Separation and divorce are among the toughest life experiences people can face.

Men report a huge range of intense reactions and feelings during and after separation.

Here are just a few:

- Frustration
- Powerlessness
- Anger
- Desperation
- Denial
- Loneliness
- Sadness
- Bewilderment
- Hurt
- Relief
- Isolation
- Shock

These feelings can lead to difficulties such as loss of appetite, trouble sleeping, and withdrawal from social networks, family or work commitments.

While painful and distressing, such responses are normal and with time these will lessen.

A new 'normal' will settle in, where it will be possible to continue on living a fulfilling and happy life.

Adjusting to the change

Separation is rarely easy. You will find yourself experiencing the highs and lows that come with all grief and loss. You will revisit memories and feelings you thought you'd left behind.

The emotional and mental impact may test your strength and your capacity to look after yourself. Often, the last thing men want to do is seek support of any kind.

Some men try to deny that the break-up has happened. Others feel ashamed that they are not coping very well. It is important to ask for help if you're not coping or feel you need it. You're likely to be surprised at how willing people are to offer support.

You could talk to:

- MensLine Australia on 1300 78 99 78 - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Friends
- Family
- Work colleagues
- Local GP
- Counselling services
- Men's groups.

It is particularly important to speak to a professional if you are struggling to maintain your normal routine, unable to get out of bed, or have thoughts of harming yourself.

Ways to get life back on track:

- Maintain regular routines with eating and sleeping
- Maintain a balance between activities and time to think
- Take the time to reflect on where you are now and what you have
- Stay in touch with family and friends
- Exercise regularly
- Avoid using alcohol and other drugs (including cigarettes) excessively
- Don't be too hard on yourself
- Don't be afraid to ask for help.

This tip sheet is part of a series of self-help tools for men. More tools can be found at www.mensline.org.au. For more information and assistance, call MensLine Australia on 1300 78 99 78.

1300 78 99 78
www.mensline.org.au

MensLine Australia is a professional telephone support, information and referral service for men, specialising in family and relationship concerns.

Talk it over
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